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PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Norma Erenú Laiwski, Wife of Detained
PCR National Leader

F. Allen Harris, Political Officer,
American Embassy, Buenos Aires

DATE : Feb. 29, 1979

SUBJECT : Activity Against PCR in April, 1978

Dr. Laiwski called at the Embassy to seek information regarding the cessation of executive detention of her husband and nine other PCR members who were working with him in a Partido Comunista Revolucionario (PCR) social action program in San Justo workers' project large (600 family) in Buenos Aires outskirts.

Dr. Laiwski stated that on April 5 during the morning rush hour an ambulance in which she was serving as the doctor was stopped on its way to pick up a sick patient in downtown

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Buenos Aires by about 12 armed men. he was taken out of the ambulance, blindfolded and taken to an unknown facility which she believes is somewhere in the city of Buenos Aires.

When she arrived at the facility, she descended a spiral staircase (escalera caraco) to a basement. She was interrogated and tortured the same morning of her abduction. She was asked her home address, names and addresses of family and friends, names and addresses of friends of her husband and names of members of the PCR. Lists of names of persons were read to her for identification. She stated that she knew very few of the names on the list. During her interrogation she was repeatedly hit and picanted. In order to make the picana more effective the mattress on which was held down was soaked with water and water was thrown over her body. She stated that

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although the picana pain was severe, she could withstand it except when the picana was used in the most sensitive places. Later she stated that the picana had been repeatedly applied to her vagina and breasts. She was removed from the table where she was held several times while the mattress was again soaked with water. She was again put back on the mattress and doused. At the conclusion of her interrogation, she was given a pill which she said she believes was anti-biotic to prevent infection.

She was then taken to a small cell which she said measured — 2 meters by 1 1/2 meters. Neither her hands nor feet were bound but she was required to wear her blindfold at all times except when she was in her windowless, lightless cell. During the 10 days of her detention in this cell on one occasion she

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heard her husband's voice in the corridor but was unable to communicate with him. She had no contact with any other prisoners during her detention. She was allowed to bathe every day after she recovered from the effects of the picana. When she needed to use the bathroom facilities she pounded on the cell door until a guard came to escort her to latrine. Several times during her detention she was removed from her cell and asked to provide addresses of individuals. Many of the individuals she did not know, others she knew the names but did not know where they lived. She was given a special diet to help her regain her strength.

On the tenth day of her detention Dr. Laiwski said she was told that a decision had been made to free her as had been determined she did not have strong political ties ("

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politicos") .were not important and would be better off at home. She was taken up the staircase, at the top she was given her identity documents, her silver ring and her wrist watch, placed in a car and dropped off in the center of Buenos Aires.

Comment: This is the third detailed report I received regarding the spiral staircase facility with the one exception that Dr. Laiwski was not given a code number. This report is in line in all details with our previous reports. Perhaps because she was held in solitary confinement maybe one explanation for this change in procedure. It also appears that a decision was made relatively early to release her as she appears to have been relatively well treated and she commented that she felt she was receiving a special strengthening diet at the

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clandestine detention facility.

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